



UPDATE

October 15, 2017

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*Prepared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health*

NIMH RELEASES STRATEGIC RESEARCH PRIORITIES UPDATE

To keep pace with the rapidly changing mental health research landscape, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) recently released its second annual update of the *Strategic Research Priorities*. These priorities serve as guidance to NIMH grantees, potential grant applicants, and staff for the design and implementation of future research. Developed and reviewed by NIMH subject matter experts and thought leaders, these updates are designed to ensure that the NIMH's priorities continue to advance research across the Institute's four Strategic Objectives outlined in its *2015 Strategic Plan for Research*, reflect the current state of the science, address gaps in research areas, and promote scientific discovery and service delivery.

Institute Update: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2017/nimh-releases-strategic-research-priorities-update.shtml>

NIH COMPLETES ATLAS OF HUMAN DNA DIFFERENCES THAT INFLUENCE GENE EXPRESSION

Researchers funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have completed a detailed atlas documenting the stretches of human DNA that influence gene expression – a key way in which a person's genome gives rise to an observable trait, like hair color or disease risk. This atlas is a critical resource for the scientific community interested in how individual genomic variation leads to biological differences, like healthy and diseased states, across human tissues and cell types.

Press Release: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-completes-atlas-human-dna-differences-influence-gene-expression>

NIH TO FUND CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE ON MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) is supporting 12 new specialized research centers that will conduct multidisciplinary research, research training, and community engagement activities focused on improving minority health and reducing health disparities. The centers will share approximately \$82 million over five years, pending the availability of funds. The Centers of Excellence program is designed to foster collaborative research in minority health and health disparities to identify critical biological, behavioral, environmental, sociocultural, and health systems factors, which will aid in developing optimal interventions to reduce targeted health disparities.

Press Release: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-fund-centers-excellence-minority-health-health-disparities>

NIH TO FUND SEVEN RESEARCH CENTERS IN MINORITY INSTITUTIONS

NIMHD will fund seven new awards to support the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Specialized Centers program. RCMI is designed to support institutional research capacity and foster the career development of new and early career investigators conducting minority health and health disparities research. The centers will share approximately \$122 million over five years, pending available funds. The RCMI program allows the promotion of science on minority health and health disparities, while increasing diversity among scientists and supporting diversity in clinical studies. NIMHD is dedicated to supporting scientists at institutions that are historically committed to training populations underrepresented in science.

Press Release: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-fund-seven-research-centers-minority-institutions>

NIAAA ALCOHOL TREATMENT NAVIGATOR POINTS THE WAY TO QUALITY TREATMENT

A new online resource is now available to help people recognize and find high quality care for alcohol use disorder, which affects more than 15 million adults in the United States (U.S.). The *Alcohol Treatment Navigator*, designed by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), is a comprehensive tool to help individuals and their loved ones navigate the often-complicated process of choosing treatment for alcohol problems. With many treatment options available, the navigator makes the search easier by telling individuals what they need to know and what they need to do to find appropriate, quality care.

Press Release: <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/niaaa-alcohol-treatment-navigator-points-way-quality-treatment>

NIH-FUNDED STUDY TO FOCUS ON NEWBORNS AFFECTED BY OPIOIDS; EXPERTS PLAN CLINICAL TRIAL TO TEST TREATMENTS FOR WITHDRAWAL SYNDROME

NIH is funding a new study to evaluate treatment options for newborns with opioid withdrawal syndrome, a condition caused by exposure to opioids during pregnancy. Currently, health care providers in the U.S. lack standard, evidence-based treatments for neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, despite states reporting more cases in recent years. The study is called, *Advancing Clinical Trials in Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome* (ACT NOW) and aims to inform clinical care of these infants. ACT NOW is funded by NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the NIH Office of the Director's Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes program.

Press Release: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-funded-study-focus-newborns-affected-opioids>

AMERICANS IN RURAL AREAS MORE LIKELY TO DIE BY SUICIDE; SUICIDE RATES FOR RURAL COUNTIES CONSISTENTLY HIGHER THAN URBAN COUNTIES FROM 2001-2015

Rural counties in the U.S. consistently had higher suicide rates than metropolitan counties from 2001-2015, according to data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The new report examined annual county level trends in suicide rates during 2001-2015 for rural counties, medium/small metropolitan counties, and large metropolitan counties, as well as demographics and mechanism of death. Overall, suicide death rates for rural counties were higher than medium/small metropolitan counties and large metropolitan counties. Additional findings include: across metropolitan and rural areas, suicide rates for males were four to five times higher than for females during the study period; suicide rates for Black, non-Hispanic individuals in rural areas were consistently lower than suicide rates for Black, non-Hispanic individuals in urban areas; and White, non-Hispanic individuals have the highest suicide rates in metropolitan counties while American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic individuals have the highest rates in rural counties. Findings by age group revealed increases in suicide rates for all ages with the highest rates and greatest rate increases in rural counties.

Press Release: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2017/p1005-rural-suicide-rates.html>

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AWARDS NEARLY \$59 MILLION TO COMBAT OPIOID EPIDEMIC, FUND DRUG COURTS

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced \$58.8 million to strengthen drug court programs and address the opioid epidemic nationwide. About \$24 million in federal grants will be awarded to 50 cities, counties, and public health departments to provide financial and technical assistance to state, local, and tribal governments that will enable them to create comprehensive diversion and alternatives to incarceration programs for individuals impacted by the opioid epidemic. An additional \$3.1 million will be awarded by the National Institute of Justice for research and evaluation on drugs and crime. The research priorities are heroin and other opioids and synthetic drugs. The DOJ also is awarding more than \$22.2 million to 53 jurisdictions to support the implementation and enhancement of adult drug courts and Veterans Treatment Courts, which serve as “one-stop-shops” to link Veterans with services, benefits, and program providers.

Press Release: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-awards-nearly-59-million-combat-opioid-epidemic-fund-drug-courts>

DOJ AWARDS MORE THAN \$130 MILLION TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY, ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND VICTIM SERVICES FOR AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE

Associate Attorney General Rachel Brand announced more than \$130 million in DOJ grants to combat violence against women, improve public safety, serve victims of crime, and support youth programs in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women awarded 101 grants totaling \$56.3 million to tribal governments and nonprofit entities to help respond to the crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and sex trafficking in Indian country.

Press Release: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-awards-more-130-million-improve-public-safety-address-violence-against>

NEW FROM NIMH

OUTREACH CONNECTION: HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017 PARTNERS MEETING

Read highlights from the 2017 Annual Meeting of the NIMH Outreach Partnership Program in the latest issue of the Program's e-newsletter.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USNIMH/bulletins/1baf69a>

NEW FROM NIH

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS UNMET TREATMENT NEEDS AMONG ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Despite current treatment guidelines, fewer than 10 percent of adults with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders receive treatment for both disorders, and more than 50 percent do not receive treatment for either disorder. The findings highlight a large gap between the prevalence of co-occurring disorders and treatment rates among U.S. adults, and the need to identify effective approaches to increasing treatment for individuals with these conditions. An analysis of data from U.S. adults with both a mental disorder and a substance use disorder indicates that only 9.1 percent of those adults received both types of care over the past year, and 52.5 percent received neither mental health care nor substance use treatment. The findings were reported in a paper authored by scientists from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the NIMH.

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2017/10/study-highlights-unmet-treatment-needs-among-adults-mental-health-substance-use-disorders>

INFOGRAPHIC: SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS (K2/SPICE) UNPREDICTABLE DANGER

This NIDA infographic shows that synthetic cannabinoids like K2 or Spice are not natural drugs and can lead to dangerous health effects. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/synthetic-cannabinoids-k2spice-unpredictable-danger>

BRAIN CIRCUIT CONNECTIVITY PREDICTS RELAPSE TO COCAINE USE

NIDA Intramural Research Program investigators have identified a resting-state brain circuit whose functional connectivity predicts the likelihood of relapse to cocaine use. Factoring in the person's years of education, the circuit's connectivity strength predicted the participants' relapse status with 71 percent accuracy at 30 days, rising to 88 percent at 150 days. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/latest-science/brain-circuit-connectivity-predicts-relapse-to-cocaine-use>

BEHAVIORAL TREATMENTS INCREASE BRAIN ACTIVITY RELATED TO COGNITIVE CONTROL

Behavioral treatments for substance use disorders affect brain function in ways that may help patients stay the course in recovery despite relapse triggers and impulses. In a NIDA-supported study, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and contingency management (CM) increased brain efficiency in regions that coordinate cognitive control—the ability to set goals and stay on task despite conflicting cues and distractors. CBT focuses on enhancing coping skills and exploring factors involved in continued drug use. CM offers small rewards, such as cash stipends or coupons for retail goods, for adherence to treatment.

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/latest-science/behavioral-treatments-increase-brain-activity-related-to-cognitive-control>

DRUGS & HEALTH BLOG: DISASTERS AND DRUG PROBLEMS: WHERE TO FIND HELP

A disaster can create incredible stress, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). And stress can increase a person's risk for lots of problems, including depression, anxiety, and related drug problems. This NIDA blog post describes common reactions that teens may have to stress and provides links to resources for support. <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/disasters-and-drug-problems-where-find-help-1>

DRUGS & HEALTH BLOG: ASHAMED ABOUT A DRUG PROBLEM? DON'T BE.

This NIDA blog post describes the role that shame can play in addiction. When a person feels shame, they feel guilty, embarrassed, and small. They don't just feel bad because they did something wrong; they feel like who they are is wrong. In addition, shame can make a drug or alcohol problem worse—especially if it makes the person too embarrassed to get help. This post encourages individuals having difficulties with alcohol or drug use to reach out for help.

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/ashamed-about-drug-problem-don-t-be>

TOOLKIT FOR PATIENT-FOCUSED THERAPY DEVELOPMENT

The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences created this toolkit to provide a collection of online resources that can help patient groups advance through the process of therapy development and provide them with the tools they need to advance medical research. The toolkit includes resources that have been developed primarily for the rare diseases community to facilitate therapeutics research and development. The tools include how to establish a patient registry, how to drive patient-focused discovery and pre-clinical research and development, how to work with NIH and the Food and Drug Administration, and how to conduct post-market surveillance. <https://ncats.nih.gov/toolkit>

BULLYING.GOV: HOW FAR CAN YOU MOVE THE NEEDLE ON BULLYING PREVENTION?

This blog post describes a new resource developed by the Health Resources and Services Administration to help measure bullying prevention efforts. The *Assessing Prevention and Implementing Change* resource contains two main tools developed for state health departments: the *Bullying Prevention Capacity Assessment*, and the *Bullying Prevention Change Package and Driver Diagram*. Schools, daycare providers, summer camp programs, youth sports, and other clubs and venues where youth convene also can use them to find meaningful strategies to promote empathy, civility, and inclusion to prevent bullying.

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/2017/10/04/how-far-can-you-move-the-needle-on-bullying-prevention.html>

ACF: SUPPORTING BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IN TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This Administration on Children and Families (ACF) bulletin summarizes the effects of early trauma on brain development, and looks at steps child welfare professionals can take to screen for developmental delays and identify the trauma-affected children and youth in their care. It also looks at ways to access cross-sector, therapeutic, and evidence-based treatment to encourage healthy recovery for trauma-affected children and youth. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/braindevtrauma/>

NEW FROM REAL WARRIORS

FOUR TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN

For many service members and Veterans, managing chronic pain is part of everyday life. Chronic pain can be from a combat injury, a tough job, or even hard training. This Real Warriors article offers four tips to help manage pain and pain's effects on overall quality of life.

<https://www.realwarriors.net/veterans/treatment/painmanagement.php>

EVIDENCE-BASED, TRAUMA-FOCUSED PSYCHOTHERAPY

This article explains possible causes of trauma and outlines treatment options that can help with trauma-related symptoms. <https://www.realwarriors.net/active/treatment/trauma-therapy.php>

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

This article helps families recognize warning signs of suicide in a service member or Veteran, and details resources that can help individuals at risk for suicide and those in a crisis.

<https://www.realwarriors.net/family/support/preventsuicide.php>

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2017

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. There are numerous ways to enhance prevention efforts in your community. A key strategy in preventing domestic violence, often called intimate partner violence (IPV), is promoting respectful, non-violent relationships. Check out these CDC resources to learn more about preventing domestic violence. <https://www.cdc.gov/Features/IntimatePartnerViolence/index.html>

NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2017

Bullying Prevention Awareness Month is an annual effort by agencies, schools, and communities to highlight bullying prevention education and awareness activities. During this month, StopBullying.gov will be sharing important resources to deepen the understanding and effects of bullying, and what research has shown to be effective in prevention. <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USHSSB/bulletins/1bbd06c>

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2017

Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is designed to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities and educate the public about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents. Reflecting the important role that different perspectives play in workforce success, this year's theme is "Inclusion Drives Innovation." The official 2017 NDEAM poster is available for downloading and to order in hard copy from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>

FACEBOOK Q&A: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE PREVENTION

OCTOBER 18, 2017, 12:00-1:00 PM ET

Ask CDC experts questions about IPV and what works to stop it before it starts at all levels. Help make relationships safe for everyone. Join CDC in promoting prevention approaches for improving the health and well-being of individuals, relationships, communities, and society.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/162410324341948/>

NIMH WEBINAR: USING THE RDOC FRAMEWORK IN DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

OCTOBER 18, 2017, 1:00-2:30 PM ET

The NIMH Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) Unit will host a webinar on using the RDoC Framework in developmental research. As a pillar of the RDoC matrix, neurodevelopment plays a critical role in the RDoC research framework in understanding psychopathology. To highlight this concept, this webinar will bring together three researchers who focus on studying developmental disorders using RDoC principles. More specifically, they will discuss how they use a dimensional perspective and multiple methodologies (both core principles of RDoC) to study neurobehavioral mechanisms associated with various disorders such as autism spectrum disorder, anxiety, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2017/rdoc-webinar-using-the-rdoc-framework-in-developmental-research.shtml>

WEBINAR: THE 2017 REVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR PTSD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDICATIONS

OCTOBER 18, 2017, 2:00 PM ET

The Department of Veterans Affairs PTSD Consultation Program Monthly Lecture Series will offer three one-hour lectures about the new *Clinical Practice Guidelines for PTSD*. This webinar will address recommendations for medications. <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/consult/lecture-series.asp>

VIDEOCAST LECTURE: COMMUNICATING SCIENCE TO THE PUBLIC: FOLLOW THE SCIENCE

OCTOBER 19, 2017, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM ET

Public understanding of science benefits both the public and the scientific enterprise; however, communicating science to the public is an acquired, not innate, skill, and it is particularly difficult and complex in domains like complementary and integrative health. Fortunately, there is a growing body of scientific evidence about what works and what does not that can be used to increase the effectiveness of science communication efforts. This National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health lecture will address both the needs for engaging with the public about science and some of the lessons learned, especially in controversial or contentious areas. This lecture will be streamed online at videocast.nih.gov and on Facebook. <https://nccih.nih.gov/news/events/IMlectures>

2017 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ALCOHOL AND OPIOID USE IN WOMEN AND GIRLS: ADVANCES IN PREVENTION, TREATMENT, AND RECOVERY

OCTOBER 26-27, 2017, WASHINGTON, DC

This national conference will highlight the intersection of harmful drinking among women, HIV infection, and adverse maternal-child health outcomes. The conference seeks to disseminate findings from the latest research on the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of alcohol and other substance misuse among girls and women, including strategies to prevent HIV infection/progression and substance-exposed pregnancies. It also will feature strategies for establishing a coalition of stakeholder organizations and researchers to develop a blueprint for a coordinated public-private response to the epidemic of substance misuse among women and girls. This conference, sponsored by the NIAAA, NIDA, the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), SAMHSA, and the NIH Office of AIDS Research is free of charge and open to the public. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/2017-national-conference-alcohol-and-opioid-use-women-girls>

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

NOVEMBER 2017

The goal of National Adoption Month, an initiative of ACF's Children's Bureau, is to increase national awareness and bring attention to the need for permanent families for children and youth in the U.S. foster care system. Each year, the initiative focuses its outreach and awareness-raising efforts around a new adoption-related theme. The 2017 theme, "Teens Need Families, No Matter What," highlights the importance of identifying well-prepared and committed families for the thousands of teenagers in foster care. Many of these young people are less likely to be adopted, often because of their age, and will too often age out of the system without a stable support system. Securing lifelong connections for these teens, legally and emotionally, is an urgent need and critical component of their future achievement and overall well-being. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>

FRONTIERS IN ADDICTION RESEARCH: THE SCIENCES OF ASTROCYTES, STRESS RESPONSE, AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

NOVEMBER 10, 2017, WASHINGTON, DC

During this mini-convention convened by NIDA and NIAAA, three scientific sessions will explore: techniques and approaches for studying astrocytes in neurological disorders and behavior; stress reactivity and immune function in brain development, addiction, and depression; and approaches towards treatment of substance abuse disorders and mental illness. <https://apps1.seiservices.com/nida-niaaa/frontiers2017/Default.aspx>

OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER TECHNICAL GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 26-27, 2017, FLAGSTAFF, AZ

Learn to write winning grants and build sustainable partnerships to improve minority health. This Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office on Minority Health grant writing workshop, being held at Northern Arizona University, is intended for university/college junior faculty, staff, and health professionals. <https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=100>

CALLS FOR PUBLIC INPUT

TRANS-NIH STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

The NIH ORWH seeks feedback on three cross-cutting themes and goals under consideration for the next trans-NIH strategic plan for women's health research. These themes will stimulate new research areas, priorities, and approaches to help put science to work for the health of women. Specifically, NIH seeks public comments on the following questions:

- What are some ways that the scope of each theme might be expanded or more narrowly focused to address the most important areas in research on women's health?
- What topics would you recommend adding to the list of cross-cutting themes for research on women's health?
- What big idea or audacious goal to improve women's health should be pursued by the NIH?

Responses accepted through November 10, 2017. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-17-108.html>

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2018-2022

The draft HHS *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2018-2022* is provided as part of the strategic planning process under the 2010 Government Performance and Results Modernization Act GPRA-MA to ensure that Agency stakeholders are given an opportunity to comment on this plan. This document articulates how the Department will achieve its mission through five strategic goals. These five strategic goals are: (1) Reform, Strengthen, and Modernize the Nation's Health Care System; (2) Protect the Health of Americans Where They Live, Learn, Work, and Play; (3) Strengthen the Economic and Social Well-Being of Americans across the Lifespan; (4) Foster Sound, Sustained Advances in Sciences; and (5) Promote Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship. Each goal is supported by objectives and strategies. HHS is seeking comments on the draft plan through October 26, 2017. <https://www.hhs.gov/draft-strategic-plan>

FUNDING INFORMATION

INTERVENTION RESEARCH TO IMPROVE NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-17-496.html> (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)

RESEARCH TO IMPROVE NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-17-464.html> (R21 Clinical Trials Optional)



National Institute
of Mental Health

The **Outreach Partnership Program** is a nationwide outreach initiative of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) that enlists state and national organizations in a partnership to increase the public's access to science-based mental health information through partnerships with national and state organizations. For more information about the program, please visit: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/outreach/partnership-program/index.shtml>. To subscribe to receive the Update every two weeks, go to: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/outreach/partnership-program/news-and-updates-from-the-program.shtml>.

The information provided in the **Update** is intended for use by NIMH Outreach Partners, National Partners and their associates for the express purpose of exchanging information that may be useful in the development of state and local mental health outreach, information, education, and partnership programs.